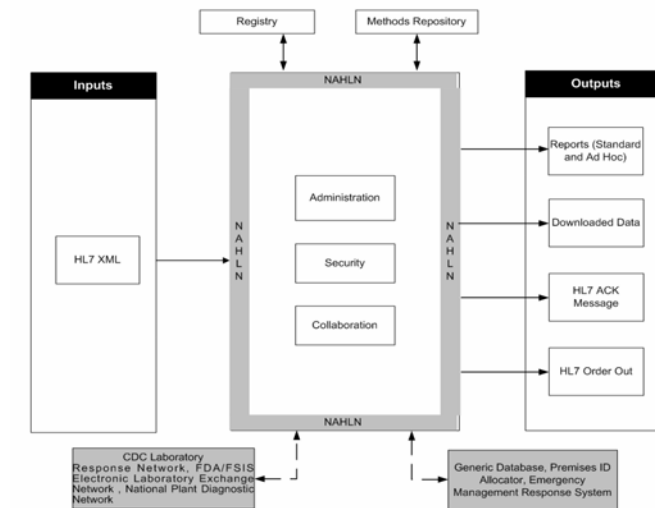




## NAHLN Information Card

### Information Technology System

A critical aspect of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) is the effort to standardize data, improve data quality, and maximize the efficiency of data transfer via the IT infrastructure and data repository. The NAHLN IT system is being integrated with numerous existing animal-health and veterinary-diagnostic data networks to allow seamless electronic transfer of information from the time diagnostic samples are collected in the field, to the addition of appropriate diagnostic test information from the NAHLN veterinary diagnostic laboratories, and finally to the daily reporting of relevant information from each submission to the NAHLN repository database. The IT system is used to enhance surveillance programs and recognize emerging issues and is designed to provide automated alerts on defined animal health events to authorized personnel who support disease prevention and response. The system allows



#### Contact Information:

National Animal Health Laboratory Network  
Phone: 515-663-7731  
E-mail: [NAHLN@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:NAHLN@aphis.usda.gov)

***NAHLN, a State and Federal partnership to safeguard animal health.***

NAHLN labs to securely transmit and store data using nationally recognized health information standards that improve data quality and data re-use in systems such as the Department of Homeland Security's National Biosurveillance Integration System (NBIS).

**Standardization of Data:** The NAHLN IT system incorporates well-defined terminology (SNOMED and LOINC standards) with the diagnostic message structure (HL7 standards) that is currently used for human-health informatics systems. The standardization of data helps ensure that information is accurately transferred from one system to another and that similar data sets can be compared from various NAHLN laboratories across the Nation.

**Improving Data Quality:** The NAHLN works closely with the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services, National Center for Animal Health Programs and Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health to ensure that the data collected from diagnostic sample submissions includes appropriate demographic and geographic detail for further epidemiologic study and modeling of disease transmission. In the event of an outbreak, the rapid assimilation of this information is vital to managing an emergency response.

**Maximizing Efficiency of Data Transfer:** The IT component of the NAHLN is currently accomplished through Web-based entry of laboratory submissions and test result data requiring duplicate data entry from field and laboratory personnel. Increasingly, through the NAHLN, data are automatically uploaded from field personnel, and diagnostic test-result information is automatically reported from individual laboratory incident-management system databases, thus eliminating repeat-data entry requirements.

**Making the NAHLN IT System Work:** The NAHLN IT system has been piloted in 5 laboratories and is currently expanding to 23 additional labs. Training is being provided to NAHLN laboratory IT personnel to implement each of these systems.

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